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SUBJECT: TURKEY-EU TROIKA CONSULTATIONS: FOCUS ON EU-NATO

REF: ANKARA 1319

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) During June 4 EU Troika-Turkey consultations in Ankara, headed for the Turks by FM Abdullah Gul and State Minister/lead EU negotiator Ali Babacan and on the EU side by German FM Steinmeier, Turkey-EU-NATO relations was one of many topics discussed. According to German DCM Pruegel, FM Gul initially ceded the floor to MFA U/S (D equivalent) Ertugrul Apakan on the issue, who stated Turkey's now-familiar position that with respect to missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan, a solution should be found within the Agreed Framework. For the Turks, Apakan stressed, this is a substantive, not a technical, problem.

¶2. (C) FM Gul then took the floor, per Pruegel, and admitted that the Turkish General Staff (TGS) stood behind the recent series of demarches on the subject to all EU countries. Gul further indicated -- in what the Germans described as the first inkling of flexibility they have seen on this -- that the GOT might be willing to consider an attempt to find a practical solution, but that their hands were not quite free. Gul's focus was on Turkey-EU-NATO's common interest in obtaining concrete, positive results in both Kosovo and Afghanistan.

¶3. (C) The representative from Solana's office, Cooper, appealed in return for concrete, pragmatic, on-the-ground solutions. He emphasized that Solana had understanding for the Turkish request for a greater role in planning such EU missions. He indicated awareness of the importance of Turkey's contributions, including in places like The Congo, without which the EU would not be able to perform some of its missions. They faced certain legal obstacles, however, and thus needed some consultative mechanism to make this work.

¶4. (C) Comment: This appears to be the first time the GOT has, in a high-profile setting, admitted the TGS is tying its hands, and is doing so on an issue on which the GOT would like to try to be more forward leaning because of the implications for EU success in Kosovo and Afghanistan. End comment.

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